

**AGADIR ACTIVITY MANAGEMENT SERVICES
PROGRESS REPORT**

FIRST QUARTER 2001

**Prepared for:
USAID/Morocco**

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**Submitted by:
Chemonics International Inc.**

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BACKGROUND

The technical assistance to implementation of the Agadir Activity Management Services is provided by Chemonics International Inc. under a IQC Contract, with a total estimated cost including fixed fee of \$1 466 920. The objective of the requirements Contract PCE-98-000 15-00 is to strengthen the institutional effectiveness of three key industry associations (APEFEL, GRITT and FIPROMER) of the Souss-Massa-Draa and to develop Total Quality Management at the Commercial Court of Agadir. The three key associations are to be used as intermediaries to deliver business support services to small and medium enterprises in the region. The overall goal of the Activity is to improve the competitiveness of Moroccan products in world markets through the raise of professional standards and lower costs for all the associations' members. In agreement with the Ministry of Justice, Chemonics International has also the mandate to analyze the court administration and case management systems and practices at the Commercial Court of Agadir and to provide technical assistance, training and commodities needed to increase its efficiency and effectiveness.

Chemonics International initial team consisting of Richard Dreiman, Project Director and Suzie LeBlanc, Chief of Party arrived in Morocco on January 21st, 2001. After spending three (3) days at USAID Headquarter in Rabat, they traveled to Agadir and were introduced to the various associations and to the Commercial Court of Agadir by USAID representatives Brad Wallach and Kamal Sebti. Meetings were also organized with Mr. Omar Anbare USAID Local Coordinator in Agadir, and Su Contact, USAID consultant who had done the organizational diagnosis of the three associations. Mr. Dreiman mission in Morocco ended on February 9th. The objective of the mission was to assist with the installation of Chemonics team in Agadir and project start-up. His Inception Mission Report (Deliverable # 1) was submitted to USAID-Rabat on February 2nd. An Action Plan outlining Chemonics planned activities to implement the Agadir Activity Management Services was drafted to ease communication on implementation activities between Chemonics Field Office in Agadir, Home Office in Washington and USAID-Rabat. The Action Plan presented in Annex 1 was discussed with the three associations, the Tribunal de Commerce and USAID and agreed upon by everyone.

SECTION 1: ADMINISTRATION

During the first Quarter of its activities in Agadir, Chemonics devoted some of its time to secure an office and hire local staff. A short-term employee Ms. Halima El Omari was first recruited for the provision of logistical coordination and related services. Sixteen (16) candidates were then interviewed for the positions of Deputy Field Director and Accountant/Office Manager. Ms. Asmaa Oubou was selected to work as Administrative / Office Manager and Naoufel Benbrahim were recruited as Technical Assistant.

Over twenty (20) apartments and various offices were visited before the current location was selected Immeuble Atlassia No. 4 on Boul. Mohamed V. A one-year lease was signed and basic services such as telephone lines and Internet connection were then secured. To be able to move into the facilities at the earliest possible time, office furniture were purchased in bulk at KITEA in Casablanca, and delivered to Agadir.

The time it would take to set up the office and have Chemonics staff in place was underestimated by 50%. The process of setting up an office was considerably slowed down by the fact that USAID activities are fairly new in the Agadir area and remains to be better known to the local administration (Maroc Telecom, Police Authority, Customs etc...). In spite of some important delays, the local staff was briefed on Chemonics and USAID rules and procedures and the office was fully operational by the end of February, six weeks after Chemonics arrival in Morocco and three weeks later than expected.

A Call for Expression of Interest, limited to the Souss-Massa-Draa was published in three national newspapers on March 9th. Thirty seven firms, consultants and institutions from the Agadir region expressed interest in providing training, equipment and services in management, finance, computer, Internet and Intranet Web Sites' design and management, Excel, Outlook Express, research on the WWW and communication related services to the Agadir Activity Management Services. The interested parties will be asked to provide us with detailed information on their experience and expertise. If required, some training could be provided to help them bring their standards to that of national and international firms. The availability of competent local business services providers is likely to play a key role in the positioning of local industries and entrepreneurs in the global economy.

SECTION 2: THE PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

Work with the three associations has been very satisfactory. Listed below are the Activities indicated in Chemonics Action Plan, followed by our up dating on the actions conducted.

1.0 Mise en place d'un Tableau de Board (Indicators of Performance)

The Indicators were set up by AUGECO as part of its contract as Local USAID Coordinator. The different associations have strong views about the indicators set up. They claim that the indicators do not really measure their performance. The Indicator of Performance established for the Agadir Activity Management Services require further refining and the targeted results need to be discussed with the associations. Time should be set-aside for this before AUGECO contract ends.

2.1 Rapid audit of membership needs in terms of services and training.

The audits are scheduled for early April in the case of GRIT. At the request of APEFEL (who's members face a major export crisis) and FIPROMER (that currently undergoes a major evaluation by a donor), the two other audits were reported to the end of April.

2.2 Training for associations' staff on how to deliver custom training to their members.

Qualified trainers have been identified and the training session is currently been promoted to the associations. It is postponed to take place immediately after the audits in training take place since it is linked to the audit of training needs of the various associations' members.

5.1 Specialized training offered by the associations.

This activity is scheduled for the 2nd Quarter of 2001.

5.1 Provision of computer equipment and software

Four computers have been purchased locally and provided to APEFEL who requested to be supplied with that equipment at the earliest possible time. The computers are Americans and were fabricated in the US and therefore comply with USAID regulations. Equipment for FIRPOMER and GRIT have been ordered and will be acquired by Chemonics Head Quarter in Washington and shipped to Agadir.

5.2 Access to Internet Services

The three (3) associations already have access to Internet services. Negotiation of special rates for their members will take place once information services to be provided to their members are identified.

5.3 Training in computer / software use

Actions related to this activity are scheduled for the 2nd Quarter of 2001.

3.4 Training in English

Courses are to be offered by the American Language Center to associations' staff and members. A limited number of registrations from each enterprise have been set to provide for a greater number of participants. Close to ninety individuals have registered and courses will begin in early May. A special rate for group teaching has been negotiated with the American Language Center.

3.5 Strategies for positioning the industries in the global economy

Actions related to this activity are scheduled for the 2nd Quarter of 2001.

5.1 Information services development strategy

Actions linked to this activity were planned for the 2nd Quarter of 2001

5.2 Communication Plan and Internet Strategy

Actions linked to this activity were planned for the 2nd Quarter of 2001

5.1 Study Tours

Actions linked to this activity were planned for the 2nd Quarter of 2001

SECTION 3: THE COMMERCIAL COURT OF AGADIR

Work with the Commercial Court of Agadir has been slightly delayed by decisions to be taken at the Ministry level. Whenever possible we collaborated with the magistrates who were very responsive and highly motivated by the collaboration with USAID through Chemonics. The approach promoted by Chemonics is to have the computer equipment installed at the Commercial Court at the earliest possible time so as to train all the staff, magistrates and clerks, into using computer and internal e-mail, before the case management and tribunal management software is installed.

This sequential approach presents the advantage to ease the stress associated with the introduction of a new technology in the work place. It was discussed with the Court's magistrates and Mr. Lotfi at the Ministry of Justice and all fully agree with it. Below are the Activities indicated in Chemonics Action Plan, followed by our up dating on the actions conducted.

1.0 Mise en place d'un Tableau de Board (Indicators of Performance)

Indicators of performance were set up by AUGECO, based on the data identified by Price Waterhouse. In the case of the Tribunal, the indicators were deemed acceptable by the magistrates. However targeted results were set without prior discussion and now required to be agreed upon by all parties involved.

1.1 Training in computer / software use

A room that can be used for training as been located at the Commercial Court. We requested from Chemonics Headquarter the authorization to purchase local equipment (8 desktop computers tables and chairs) in order to begin the training at the earliest possible time, as agreed with the magistrates. Specifications for the equipment to be purchased were elaborated by Chemonics computer engineer and sent to the Ministry of Justice for review. We are now waiting for the Ministry of Justice approval to proceed.

5.1 Professional training

Preliminary contacts have been established regarding the training magistrates scheduled for the Fall 2001.

5.2 Training in management

A local institution that recently offered a similar training to the Commercial Court of Appeal of Marrakech was approached to deliver the 44 hours of training in general management to the Commercial Court of Agadir. As per our Work plan, these modules are to be offered in May and June.

5.3 Communication

The one-day training it to be offered by the institution used for the general management course. As per our Work Plan it is to be offered in May or June.

5.4 English

The magistrate has already completed 200 hours of English Course. They are now moving to the Intermediate Level. The number of hours per course will however be decreased from 8 hours/week to 4 hours in order to free some time for the courses in computer and general management .

2.1 Acquisition of equipment

Specifications for the equipment to be purchased were elaborated by Chemonics computer engineer and sent to the Ministry of Justice for review. We are now waiting for the Ministry of Justice approval to proceed.

5.1 Automation of the Court overall management and Case Management Procedures

No actions planned for the period.

5.1 Development of management system for the Court's Archive

No actions planned for the period.

5.1 Technical assistance in communication to the Chiefs of Service

No actions planned for the period.

5.2 Technical assistance in archive management

No actions planned for the period.

5.3 Technical assistance in court's layout and organization

No actions planned for the period.

6.1 Study Tour

No action planned for the period.

CONCLUSION

Chemonics team in Agadir has completed most of the activities scheduled in its Work Plan for the period, at the exception of two activities: Section 2: Activity 2.1 - *Rapid audits of the associations' needs*, that will take place one month later than expected, and Section 3: Activity 1.3 – *General Management Training to the magistrates* that is delayed by two months. Otherwise, the implementation of the Agadir Activity Management Services remains in phase with its schedule.

In the course of the first two months of its work in Agadir, Chemonics team gained valuable knowledge of its institutional partners and of their activities. An open and trusting working relationship has been established with all. Substantial work needs to be accomplished in a short period of time. But now that the initial project start-up phase is over, we are confident that results targeted by the Agadir Activity Management Services can be reached.

We are thankful for the constant support of USAID/Rabat.